LEAD VERSUS THESIS

A lead is the opening statement of a piece of writing. A lead and a thesis are very different. A lead is an attention-grabbing question, quote, definition or statement of fact that comes at the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of an introductory paragraph.

The lead should grab the reader’s attention and make the reader feel interested so that they want to find out more. There are **ten** common types of leads. They are represented below by a few sentences but could be longer and more developed.

1. Action: "Jolly kept blowing and pushing. I kept wondering how it looked inside Jilly. Was it complete dark? And I never knew if Jilly ever heard her mother say that word or not” (Wolff p. 188)
2. Question: “Can people learn from their mistakes?”
3. Announcement or Statement: Childhood experiences influence and shape people’s lives in nearly permanent ways.
4. Puzzle or Riddle: “What’s the best way to improve the life of a broke and uneducated teenage mother of two?”
5. Monologue or Dialogue: "Reality is I got baby puke on my sweater & shoes and they tell me they’ll cut off the electricity and my kids would have to take a bath in cold water. And the rent ain’t paid like usual. Reality is my babies only got one thing in the whole world and that’s me and that’s the reality. You say I don’t face reality? You say that?” (Wolff p. 20)
6. Setting: “This Jolly’s apartment is disorderly and it smells. But I can see right away there’s a lot causing it” (Wolff p. 3)
7. Reflection: “I’m telling you this just the way it went with all the details I remember as they were, and including the parts I’m not sure about” (Wolff p. 3)
8. Theme-based: Learning to correct mistakes and to improve is a slow process and it not only requires patience and determination, it requires people to build self-confidence and believe in themselves and their ability to grow and improve.
9. Figurative Language, Metaphor or Simile: You don’t “learn your steam” in one day.
10. Quote: Muhammad Ali says, “It’s lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges, and I believe in myself.”

A thesis is a main idea statement that sets forth DEBATABLE and ARGUABLE claims. A thesis statement sums up a complete argument and comes at the END of an introductory paragraph. It includes the claims that the writer will prove through evidence and evaluation.

**Examples of a non-debatable SIMPLE thesis statement with one claim:**

Jolly is a young mother who lacks confidence.

Jolly is a bad mother.

**Examples of a debatable SIMPLE thesis statement with one claim:**

Jolly is a young mother who lacks confidence because she is too ashamed of her past experiences of teenage pregnancies to ask for the help and support of others.

OR

Jolly should return to school so that she can become a more confident and responsible mother of her children.

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| 1. JOLLY   **Lead:** Sometimes a person must face her fears in order to grow up.  **Thesis:** Although Jolly is a fearful and unprepared mother, she learns that she can become a more responsible and confident parent by admitting that she needs help and seeking support.  **Create alternate lead:**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| 1. HORNBECK   **Lead:** Snob-- a person with an exaggerated respect for high social position or wealth who seeks to associate with social superiors and dislikes people or activities regarded as lower-class.  **Thesis:** While Hornbeck at first seems to be an educated, sophisticated person who tells the truth, it becomes clear that he is as narrow-minded and judgmental as the townspeople he always mocks.  **Create alternate lead:**  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| 1. JEREMIAH BROWN   Lead: “He who troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind.” (Lawrence and Lee, page 67).  Thesis: Although Reverend Brown claims to be a faithful, religious man, he is actually a vicious, petty person who uses the words of the Bible to damn all who disagree with him.  **Create an alternate lead:** |